



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 10/706,036      | 11/13/2003  | Dorothy L. Wright    | 22644.00            | 6026             |

37833 7590 04/20/2005

LITMAN LAW OFFICES, LTD  
PO BOX 15035  
CRYSTAL CITY STATION  
ARLINGTON, VA 22215

EXAMINER

LE, HUYEN D

|          |              |
|----------|--------------|
| ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
|----------|--------------|

3751

DATE MAILED: 04/20/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/706,036

Applicant(s)

WRIGHT ET AL.

Examiner

Huyen Le

Art Unit

3751

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 November 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 14-16 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 11/13/03 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 11/13/2003.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Election/Restrictions***

1. Applicant's election with traverse of group I, claims 1-6 in the reply filed on 01/31/2005 is acknowledged. It has been noted that claims 7-13 depend from claim 1, therefore, claims 7-13 do not stand in a combination/subcombination relationship. The restriction on claim 7-13 has been rescinded. Claims 7-13 are now rejoined with group I.
2. The traversal is on the grounds that group II, claims 14-16, does not have a utility by itself or in other combination. This is not found persuasive because evident claim 1 does not include a locking mechanism and evident claim 14 has a separate utility as a locking mechanism on a door. Claims 14 –16 have been withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected invention.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Sloan et al (4,680,817).

The Sloan et al reference discloses a bath tub comprising a unitary body having a front sidewall 38 with a predetermined height, a left sidewall 34 coextensive in height with the front sidewall 38, a rear sidewall having a height commensurate with the left

Art Unit: 3751

sidewall 34 height and a depth commensurate with an elevated seat 16, a floor 20 between the seat 16 and the front sidewall 38, and a right sidewall forming a door frame extending from adjacent the front sidewall 38 adjacent the seat 36; a shower head 46 connected to a flexible cord 50 extending from the upper extension of the left wall 34 and a water valve 52 proximate the elevated seat 16; a removable water-tight door 26 fitting the door frame; a drain hole 60 and stopper in the floor, and proximate the rear sidewall and seat 16; and an overflow/drain stopper element (col. 4, lines 28-32) positioned adjacent an uppermost height on the left sidewall and above the drain hole 60.

Regarding claim 7, the tub further includes a door locking mechanism 66.

#### ***Allowable Subject Matter***

5. Claims 2-6 and 8-13 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

#### ***Conclusion***

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The Andersen, Gruidel et al, Houle et al, Sowder, Russell and Hanson references show bath tubs having seats and sidedoors.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Huyen Le whose telephone number is 571-272-4890. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Art Unit: 3751

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Justine Yu can be reached on 571-272-4835. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Huyen Le  
Examiner  
Art Unit 3751

HL  
April 15, 2005